

20/20 Publication

Inside this issue:

<i>Intentional Choice</i>	1
<i>Growing Naturally</i>	4
<i>Quips and Quotes</i>	6
<i>Noteworthy Student Quotes</i>	7
<i>Philosophy of the DARC</i>	8

QUARTERLY QUOTES

“Grace does not grant permission to live in the flesh; it supplies power to live in the Spirit.”

John MacArthur

“Grace is the governess of our choices to follow the promptings of the Spirit *within*.”

Jaque Shank

“Nothing whatever pertaining to godliness and real holiness can be accomplished without grace.”

Augustine

“Grace is the power to choose well. We know by grace that every *beneficial* decision we make is a higher form of Christ in us *as us*.”

Jaque Shank



Intentional Choice

By Jaque Shank

For years I’ve been sitting on the word “choice” like a hen sits on an egg. No matter what I thought or others said about the word I knew it had to be important to God or He would not have given it to me to care for. Finally, it hatched! This is how it happened.

This morning I was thinking about how God has said everything that needs to be said about anything and everything in the whole counsel of His Word. In the O.T. we read the Ten Commandments, as well as how to eat, live sanitary lives, prosper financially and even how to raise our children. In the law God gave complete instructions for right living. Well, what He *intended* then hasn’t changed one iota today, for He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. However, because the law only incites the flesh to sin, and because the new creation is *dead to the law*, we are emphatically commanded to ignore the law! Many Scriptures con-

firm this; here’s just one:

So Christ has made us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get all tied up again in the chains of slavery to Jewish laws and ceremonies. Listen to me, *for this is serious*: if you are **counting on circumcision and keeping the Jewish laws** to make you right with God, then **Christ cannot save you**. I’ll say it again. Anyone trying to find favor with God by being circumcised must always obey every other Jewish law or perish. **Christ is useless to you if you are counting on clearing your debt to God by keeping those laws; you are lost from God’s grace.**

Galatians 5:1-4 TLB Emphasis mine

So here we are today, no longer under law but grace. What does that look like? One of the examples of healthy living in the O. T. was His instruction to the Israelites not to eat scavengers...animals that clean up the earth’s trash ...like sea creatures without fins—shellfish for example,

Intentional Choice, cont.

or earth dwellers like pig, rabbit, and so on. Concerning their income, they were told to return one-tenth to God, or, to tithe. On and on we read the cold hard facts, but we now understand that we have no power in ourselves to do it.

Now born again, the Spirit of Christ lives in us *as us*. So when the law said you “shall not eat it,” under grace we are free to eat anything we want. We get to decide. We’re also free not to tithe or give or do one solitary thing written in the law. We, by grace get to ignore the law; we’re free from ever having to pay attention to it again. So how then shall we live?

There is a “similar” interesting statement that Paul makes twice in 1 Corinthians: **"Everything is permissible for me"--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"--but I will not be mastered by anything.**

1 Corinthians 6:12 (NIV)

"Everything is permissible"--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"--but not everything is constructive.

1 Corinthians 10:23 (NIV)

If a thing was right under the law, grace doesn’t make it wrong, just more beneficial—if we live from *inward* grace and not from the *outward* letter of the law. We are to ignore the law’s instructions because Christ lives in us *as us*, putting joy and spontaneity in the doing of what was once impossible to do. Grace gives us Christ-the Law-Fulfilled in us *as us*, so we don’t have to worry about being perfect or meeting God’s demands. We get to live with perfect joy in Christ, our present perfection.

Jesus said, **“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”**

Matthew 5:17-18 (NIV)

So then Christ in us “*as*” us is the happy, joyful, spontaneous fulfillment of right living! No more do we say “*I have to* refrain from crab” or “*I have to* give God back His tenth.” No! We say, “Abba, my delight is in the obedience of faith to your presence *within* me; my only food is to do your will.” So grace is the governess of our choices to follow the promptings of the Spirit *within*. Grace is the power to choose well. We know by grace that every *beneficial* decision we make is a higher form of Christ in us *as us*.

Grace allows us to enjoy a personal, intimate relationship with God in the freedom of *intentional* choice. Every relationship in life happens (or not) because of *intentional* choice. Ours is a partnership with Christ. For example, we know that we are as close to God as we choose to be and are experiencing Christ as we choose to know Him.

When I climb into my husband’s lap and hug his neck I don’t do it because he told me to but because I choose to sneak up and surprise him with another form of affection. Free choice is the privilege of the sons of God—something only they get to exercise. That’s what grace is all about. So I ask myself; how aware am I of this present grace—how intentional? I can choose to come closer to God or

Intentional Choice, cont.

to keep Him at an arm's distance. My joy is in knowing that choices abound.

One might argue that we are not choosing *freely* if the law is written on our hearts. Yes, I see; so if I'm *compelled* to choose what is written within, how free am I--really? Well, I got to choose my slavery to truth or error—to Christ or Satan—and now, since I've chosen Christ once-for-all, I get to decide how much to enjoy Him—*or not*. The end of the matter is that only Christ is free so only in Him do we enjoy freedom. Because of Christ we have free choice! So what will it be? As Christians we can enjoy *all* the righteousness, peace, and joy possible as we choose to remain *intentional* with what is written within. It's our choice...because it's *His choice for us...*

Love, Not Obligation

I know of a husband and wife who didn't really love each other. The man was very demanding, so much so that he prepared a list of rules and regulations for his wife to follow. He insisted that she read them over every day and obey them to the letter. Among other things, his "do's and don'ts" indicated such details as what time she had to get up in the morning, when his breakfast should be served, and how the housework should be done.

After several long years, the husband died. As time passed, the woman fell in love with another man, one who dearly loved her. Soon they were married. This husband did everything he could to make his new wife happy, continually showering her with tokens of his appreciation. One day as she was cleaning house, she found tucked away in a drawer the list of commands her first husband had drawn up for her. As she looked it over, it dawned on her that even though her present husband hadn't given her any kind of list, she was doing everything her first husband's list required anyway. She realized she was so devoted to this man that her deepest desire was to please him out of love, not obligation.

Source Unknown



By: Susan Mucklow

My activity is to believe on the Son; understanding the gospel is my hope of living it in a way that others are drawn to Him. People are not interested in religion. They crave freedom and recognize it when they see it. Every person knows what freedom looks like. God made sure of this when He put His fingerprints all over creation. Freedom mirrors His image.

My Christian walk (as yours) has been formative and awakening. Each season and span of time enriched His Word as my meat and the Holy Spirit as the Teacher living in my heart. Believers experience the gospel in a profound way when they discover *that* Teacher as a new Source for living. A secret of true mentorship is helping others to trust the Holy Spirit as Teacher, Guide, Counselor, and Friend. To hear His voice is to touch union with Christ and the heart of the gospel.

Journalizing (as a tool) brings personal confirmation of the Lord's presence in myself and of His presence in others. The practice unveils union. In

written dialogue with Him I see the new creation (*me*, in *union* with Christ) and with the eyes of faith I see that the old has passed away and all things have become new.

The life I live, I live by faith in the Son of God; I live trusting a life that is *not my own*. Like Paul, I am crucified with Christ, never-the-less I live, yet it is not I that lives, but Christ who lives in me. This is a piece of the paradoxical good news that frees me from the urge to manufacture my own change. I am born to inherit this freedom and I press faith to *receive* it. He is at work in me, so I no longer *focus* on my perceived need for change. As a result, changes that reflect Him become natural movements. The actions I take are less hindered by the mental distraction of analyzing good, bad, smart, stupid, right, wrong, strong or weak. Actions occur in recognition and remembrance of who I am.

Recognition refers to *being* while changing refers to *doing*. I focus on the being, not the doing. If identity is likened to a spider then its web is the attention grabber. Wrong identification spins wrong focus. Through proper identification, the Lord affirms our oneness,

ends duality, and also reveals the organic nature of change. Change comes faster when I see *who I am* than it does when I *try to do* what I should. When I am focused on being, change occurs without thinking.

While thinking I was the captain of my fate I thought all change was up to me. If change *wasn't* occurring then I believed I had only myself to blame. I thought, "I must not be *willing* to make the hard choices that produce change." My cart was before the horse which made it difficult to move forward. The horse power was in the wrong position! When more emphasis is on me (a simple cart) than is on the Lord (the powerful horse) then the gospel becomes a hard sell. It just looks like a lot of work to onlookers. It is difficult to *walk the walk* if the gospel is misaligned.

Even with the cart before the horse, I made it to where I am. This is the glory of the Lord. He uses everything, wastes nothing, and works all things for the good of those who love Him. He uses each piece of the journey to form a personal vision for helping others. My heart naturally wants to use my experience to help others walk a smooth path. (*continued next page*)

Only God knows what it takes to put *substance* to truth. For me, it required a season of isolation. I lacked the courage to trust Him *apart from other sources* and so He molded my circumstances into His breeding ground. Radical trust was born and I touched a higher *personal* level of dependency on God.

I rest in an acceptance of His righteousness as my own and my identification is nestled in His name, His character, and His life. The cross is a finished work and the new creation is its crowning glory. His sovereignty overshadows my whole being. A shift in focus has revealed Him as the Author and Finisher of my faith; the *Keeper* of "all things Susan." He is the *only* One Who is *all the while* at work in me causing me to *will and work* for His good pleasure. He is the horsepower that *moves* this cart.

I always thought *I* must be willing to *make* a change but now I see that Christ is the *Change* who is willing to *make* me. The power to change will appear in me as incontestable desire and subsequent action. It is His life living my life. I'm not choosing each change - each change is choosing me; and yet I am choosing each change.

Paradox is at play but my understanding is seasoned as I trust His hand to stir this pot. When given time, choice and change are irresistible; each surfacing as my *obvious next step*. The new heart transcends the mind, revealing God as the God of *pure gift*.

Change and growth are organic when I am allowed the grace to grow into changes that reflect who I am *even as* who I am comes into focus. An ugly duckling becomes a swan in time. Change is a process, perfected over time. The fruit bears the good nature of the seed. Developmental stages look awkward, but in the end, Christ is reflected in me, as me.

Conscious identification with (and reliance upon) Christ is my practice. It is the work of believing and the renewing of my mind. It is not always easy to hold this posture, especially when it *seems* like God isn't at work in me; but He's asked me to trust Him even if it *seems* like He is neglecting a promise. I hold true even when it *seems* like the flesh is winning and making a mockery out of my trust. Often I feel both delight and apprehension ~ my heart at rest while the flesh trembles and the soul wavers.

His life is active; good change is perpetually rising as the natural leaven of this new creation. Change is a distinct feature of my being. My view has softened; hard times are just a part of life. They are not hard lessons denoting wrong choices or rebellion. My heart always responds favorably to the Lord. Submission and obedience are a natural response to being loved. He is my Inborn Teacher and I learn by observing His life in me. The role of teacher, lesson, and student are integrating as one. I resist old thought patterns that separate me from the teacher and from the lesson I am *already* learning.

Many words and topics add mystery to the paradox. For instance, I have no need to be taught and yet I continue to learn. My source of learning is internal which doesn't mean that outside sources don't teach lessons. They do; but an outside source is not my teacher since it has no *power to cause* me to learn. Learning is a gift received in and through my union with Christ. There's not a lesson waiting to be taught, only a life of learning to be spontaneously lived - in peace and joy and in the absence of fear.

No soul can be really at rest until it has given up all dependence on everything else and has been forced to depend on the Lord alone. As long as our expectation is from other things, nothing but disappointment awaits us. Feelings may change, and will change with our changing circumstances; doctrines and dogmas may be upset; Christian work may come to naught; prayers may seem to lose their fervency; promises may seem to fail; everything that we have believed in or depended upon may seem to be swept away, and only God is left, just God, the bare God, if I may be allowed the expression; simply and only God.

Hannah Whitall Smith

Wherever thou goest, whatever thou dost at home, or abroad, in the field, or at church, do all in a desire of union with Christ, in imitation of His tempers and inclinations, and look upon all as nothing, but that which exercises, and increases the spirit and life of Christ in thy soul. From morning to night keep Jesus in thy heart, long for nothing, desire nothing, hope for nothing but to have all that is within thee changed into the spirit and temper of the holy Jesus. This new birth in Christ, thus firmly believed and continually desired, will do everything that thou wantest to have done in thee, it will dry up all the springs of vice, stop all the workings of evil in thy nature, it will bring all that is good into thee, it will open all the gospel within thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of God.

William Law

When you felt inclined to pray, it was Jesus Christ who moved you in that direction. When you said, "I think I see more clearly today; truth seems to be enlarging"- it was Christ who was performing a miracle upon you. Trace all happy impulse, all sacred inspiration, all ennobling influence, to the touch, the glance, the benediction of Christ.

Joseph Parker

Symptoms of Inner Peace



- Tendency to think & act spontaneously, rather than from fears based on past experiences.
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- Loss of interest in judging self.
- Loss of interest in judging others.
- Loss of interest in conflict and one-upmanship.
- Loss of interest in interpreting actions of worry.
- Loss of ability to worry (This is a SERIOUS symptom!).
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Feelings of contentment and connectedness with others and with Nature.
- Frequent attacks of smiling.
- Increased susceptibility to love and to "passing it forward."
- Increased tendency to let things happen rather than make things happen.

NOTE: *If you have all or even most of the above symptoms, your condition of Inner Peace may be so far advanced as to be untreatable!*

~ Source Unknown



Noteworthy Student Quotes

I want to encourage people to seek our Father and point them to the Father as He does the work in them. I want to encourage them to keep focusing on Him. I was encouraged by other Visionkeepers which are my great example and I want to do the same for others now that I am a Visionkeeper.

S. Aguilera



Being a Visionkeeper taught me to love others and even more, to love them *as they are*. It taught me to value the differences in each of us. As a class facilitator I found a practical outlet for showing compassion toward others. As a result, I found myself being more compassionate toward my family and even myself.

K. Schinhofen

When I came to Visionwriters I was breaking into pieces and couldn't put the pieces back together. I didn't know that apart from Christ I *never could*. All my life I've had a heart that bleeds for people in this world as needy as me. I understand now the bleeding of my heart is His heart within me. I had no clue that I'd become a VK but I did, and I am learning to share His suffering heart for others.

E. Juarez

“I was entrusted with the VI strategy out of my own desperation. I always felt dissatisfied and often contended with the thought that I was a rebel in His church. Eventually, I realized the Lord *meant* for me to feel dissatisfaction for He used it to build a structure to facilitate His presence as mankind's only Source of satisfaction. I wouldn't have found His path if it weren't for that nagging sense of lack and dissatisfaction. He intended it as a call on my life from the very beginning and it took every ounce of frustration,



emptiness, and ache to get me to the point of seeking His answers. The ache was always for more of Him. The strategy was established so I could find Him. I came for Him, I stay for Him...but now it's more...I stay for you now, too. I am becoming a “self for others.” My heart is for His people. I have a deep and passionate love that I cannot begin to comprehend. I cry deeply with His love for the church. That which left me feeling dissatisfied is now the very thing that my heart yearns for. I want the church to press into the kingdom so badly that it's become my life's story. I wouldn't have picked me for this job; God must know what He's doing ~ I trust Him and we keep going!”

Jaque (Banas) Shank

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About Us

Visionwriters is a mentoring program with a long-term vision or worldview; one that is committed to a long-term Gospel. Vision either determines victory, or its absence produces despair. God's word imparts vision. Writing the vision helps us sort things out, for thoughts are untangled at the point of a pen. But writing isn't enough if it falls short of application. We help people apply the truth, because truth without application is just information. When truth is applied it is powerful.

We facilitate people who ache to hear the voice of Truth and experience a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ ~ people who want to hear God's voice and open their communication with God ~ those who want answers to their most perplexing questions ~ people ready to admit there is a hole inside and who want to overcome this inner loneliness.

Visionwriting, is taking dictation from the Holy Spirit. Because we want to understand God's personal instructions, we write to capture, assimilate and obey them. You will learn how to hear God's voice, have communication with God through a spiritual relation with Him. Through that spiritual relationship you will overcome loneliness.

Philosophy of the D.A.R.C.

D = Discipline

God's discipline, sated with love, is our wake up call to righteousness. A renewed mind can't grasp the revelation of righteousness alone; this revelation requires the heart to be awakened by the voice of His love. "Today if you will hear My voice..." (Hebrews 3:7-8). To hear with disciplined intent is to not only agree that God initiated a covenant with us, but to finally agree to fully and personally receive it. A long persistence in the right direction is required if we are going to 'see' the place to which God calls us to abide. We write the vision out of our deep longing to "understand" and then "do" what we see our Father doing.

A = Accountability

Each one of us is accountable for our own personal relationship with God as we bear it in front of others. Because we genuinely want to read so we can run with the vision, we surrender to the Holy Spirit and He leads us to what helps us sort out our thoughts and let go of what isn't true; then we can integrate what is true into our hearts and lives. Here we begin to learn the freedom of open and honest relationships.

R = Relationship

Our relationship with God is central to everything and everyone. It is intimate, up close, and personal. Therefore we are ready to explore ourselves the way God knows us and to drop human judgment in order to receive others and encourage them toward the recognition of all God knows them to be. We are "response-able" as we proclaim the truth—here as "selves for others."

C = Community

We need one another; God made us that way. So community is the place all things finally make sense—where God's promises are realized—where the corporate ache is filled. As we operate in union with Him we lose ourselves and get nothing less than our true selves back. This is when we begin to deeply experience our self-giving nature and where "the whole is defined by the sum of its parts."